

**Statement by COM Michael E. Parmly upon the release of the State Department's  
annual Human Rights Report for 2005  
March 8 2006**

- Today is International Women's Day. As you may know, the first National Women's Day was observed in the United States in 1909. Today, I'd like to recognize the sacrifices Cuban women have to make to help their families get by. Most are busy "resolviendo," doing whatever it takes to put food on the table and clothes on their children's backs. Unfortunately, life has gotten even more difficult, with electricity and food prices rising. I look forward to the day when Cuban women -- who hold the country together -- enjoy the prosperity they deserve.
- Three hours ago, Secretary Rice -- an amazing woman in her own right -- unveiled the State Department's annual Human Rights Report for 2005. We'd like to offer you copies of our Cuba section, which documents systematic violations of fundamental rights. We hope you'll read it carefully. If you have any questions, or would like assistance in contacting any of the victims, we would be happy to help.
- We live in Cuba at an interesting time, and I'm not referring to the Baseball Classic, or the flag park. Cuba's courageous dissidents are experiencing a sinister crackdown, not unlike the one unleashed three years ago, which resulted in the imprisonment of 75 pro-democracy activists.
- The ongoing repression was acknowledged recently by Christine Chanet, the U.N. Human Rights Commissioner's Personal Representative for Cuba, who called world attention to the Cuban Government's ongoing repression of the Cuban people.
- It will come as a surprise to none of you to hear that "acts of repudiation" are occurring across the island. The problem with this phrase is that it doesn't convey the raw fear felt by victims. When a Government-mobilized mob gathers at the home of a free-thinking Cuban and offers hateful chants, threats or violence, the victim suffers enormously, as do family members.
- Members of the free press, I encourage you to meet with Cuba's nonviolent opposition. Among these activists is a growing number of former political prisoners, who are being warned they'll be thrown back in jail if they don't toe the Government line.
- I encourage all who care about democracy, personal freedom and human rights to focus world attention on the plight of Cubans who are punished by their government for advocating rights that all Cubans are entitled to under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.